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AFFILIATION

By AMY M. HILLIARD, R.N.

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THERE can be no question of the ultimate benefit of affiliation to schools which cannot give adequate practical instruction without it, but such a school, if it desires to give a three years' course, will be confronted with the following problems: (1) difficulty in securing proper affiliation; (2) enrollment of one-third more pupils; (3) arrangement of class work in home school—to allow for break in its continuity; (4) obtaining consecutive class work during the year of affiliation; (5) arrangement of relief in case of very protracted illness on the part of any pupil during affiliation; (6) allowing sufficiently frequent vacations; (7) conducting final examinations.

The advantages of affiliation have become so obvious that there is not at this time the difficulty that there has been in securing one that will be of mutual benefit.

When affiliation is made for a year's work a third more pupils are required. In a school of from twenty-five to thirty pupils, two pupils are sent away quarterly and two return. This we have found breaks into the continuity of the second and third year's work very considerably. If the entire intermediate class could be sent at one time this would be obviated. This has not seemed possible, so we combined the intermediate and senior classes and have three divisions in the school—preliminary, junior and senior.

As far as we are able we send the pupils away at the end of the junior year. They have then had all the first year's work and examinations. Classes vary in size and we have found that some of the pupils of a large class cannot leave here until they are well into their intermediate year. This happens when the class is very large. If the next class is small the condition solves itself, but when the following class is also large we have been able to send additional pupils at certain times. All pupils who cannot go at the end of their junior year enter the senior class and take up the senior work until they leave. Senior classes are given in the same order every year and pupils upon their return take up the senior work where they left it the year before.

It has been difficult for these hospitals to give our pupils consecutive

class work except in obstetrics, on account of the quarterly changes of nurses. This has necessitated our making provision for this instruction here either before the pupils leave or after they return.

When it becomes necessary on account of protracted illness to send a pupil to relieve another, it introduces an irregularity into the plans for the work which is hard for both schools to overcome as it takes a year to straighten it out.

It has been found difficult to allow sufficiently frequent vacations. No vacations are given during the year of affiliation, as the pupils are transferred at the end of the nine months from one hospital to another. As our school is several hundred miles distant from the hospitals with which it affiliates, the impossibility of granting vacations between affiliations is obvious. We plan to allow the first vacation at the end of the junior year and the second upon completion of affiliated work. This, we regret to say, is not always possible and even when it is it makes a further very undesirable break in the senior class and lecture work.

In a few instances where pupils have not begun the supplementary training until well into the third year it has been necessary to conduct final examinations by mail—a not altogether satisfactory proceeding for either school.

It is surely of great advantage to have pupils on general duty who are prepared to meet surgical or other emergencies which arise frequently in a large institution, which are not of sufficient frequency to give all pupil nurses proper training, but offer an excellent opportunity for supplementing their ward training of this character with work here among private patients. A further advantage is that when the senior nurse returns after a year's absence she finds an entirely new junior class. Practically all pupils who were on duty here when she left save her own classmates are either taking the affiliated training or are graduated. She is entrusted with various positions of responsibility and, as she is not acquainted in any way with the junior pupils, she is by reason of the poise gained from her varied experience and the junior's unfamiliarity with her able to maintain good discipline.

It would seem that the introduction of pupils from one school into another for so long a time would interfere with necessary discipline, but our two and one-half years' experience with the same affiliations has been devoid of anything approaching unpleasantness or friction between pupils of both schools. In fact, the homecoming pupils are, by their enthusiasm, an inspiration to the others.